



April 18, 2011

Mr. Charles D. Snelling, Chairman
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
1 Aviation Circle
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Snelling:

We are writing to express our outrage with the April 6, 2011 decision of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) Board of Directors regarding the alignment for the proposed Metrorail station at Dulles International Airport. The MWAA Board has bypassed its funding partners and gave no consideration to the fiscal impact of this decision on Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the Commonwealth, and those who use the Dulles Toll Road.

To state our position very clearly, we cannot and will not fund the additional cost of the tunnel alternative in Dulles Airport when a less expensive alternative can be constructed with less risk and in a shorter period of time. This alternative is the aerial alignment at the North Garage. We are perplexed as to why the MWAA Board of Directors ignored its funding partners and made these decisions in isolation. This was not the case in Phase 1.

When the cost of Phase 1 required had to be reduced, all partners were at the table to participate in the Principals' meetings and make decisions to benefit the project, and not just one partner. Two major decisions were made in Tysons Corner regarding a tunnel. First, Fairfax County, as MWAA does today, believed a tunnel in Tysons Corner was the better alternative, but the County was told by the MWAA CEO that the tunnel would be treated as a "betterment" and would have to be financed by the County. Being pragmatic, the County supported the aerial alignment contained in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. This is where the second tunnel issue hit the County. Even the FEIS tunnel alignment was too expensive to meet the Federal Transit Administration's cost-effectiveness criterion. The Principals made a decision to reduce the tunnel by over 2,200 feet, re-design an underground station to an at-grade station, and file an Environmental Assessment with the FTA to approve the revised alignment. If MWAA cannot advance the Phase 2 aerial alignment, then the tunnel alignment would be treated as a "betterment" and the additional cost of the tunnel will have to be fully funded by MWAA without funding from the Counties, the Commonwealth, or the Dulles Toll Road.

The Principals and the project team had a theme about the cost of Phase 1: “no pain, no project.” The Principals acted responsibly to ensure that the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project Phase 1 would move forward and become a reality bringing much needed public transit improvements to the Dulles International Airport and Fairfax and Loudoun Counties.

The MWAA Board of Directors has to be responsible and pragmatic about Phase 2. Your staff has cited many instances where transit ridership to major international airports in the United States and cities worldwide represents about one-quarter of all ridership at these stations. The bulk of the ridership is from airport employees; the tunnel alignment will serve very few airport employees and will not be close to future development at Dulles International Airport. Reagan National Airport is a prime example where workers use transit at a rate almost three times greater than airport passengers. We also believe the MWAA has made a premature decision to halt work on the aerial alignment and the Environmental Assessment that has been submitted to the FTA in draft.

In order for Fairfax County and Loudoun County to make a decision about participation in Phase 2, an alternative alignment must be identified with a cost as near to the MWAA original Phase 2 estimate of \$2.5 billion as possible. There are a number of steps that MWAA must undertake to make this happen:

1. MWAA must place all decisions in the hands of the Principals (Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the Commonwealth, MWAA, and WMATA), and not solely the MWAA Board of Directors – a divide and conquer approach is no longer an acceptable means of managing Phase 2 of this project,
2. MWAA must continue to evaluate the aerial alignment to bring the cost of each alternative as close to \$2.5 billion as possible before a decision can be made in a final alignment,
3. MWAA must include the cost of all facilities (parking garages, bus bays, and other ancillary station facilities) in the Preliminary Engineering cost estimate; Fairfax and Loudoun Counties will not accept 100% of the cost or the construction risk for these garages – these are project costs shared by all partners.
4. An independent Value Engineering Contractor must evaluate the design as a method of reducing cost. Value engineering must focus on the entire Phase 2 alignment and should include aerial versus tunnel alignment, and other cost saving measures such as redesign of station canopies, elimination of escalators for level changes of 25 feet or less, design of a rail yard to accommodate 180 rail cars rather than 250 rail cars, but allow for future storage and maintenance capabilities, use of prevailing wage rates rather than Davis-Bacon rates, assignment of the responsibility for a PLA with the Rail Project Executive Director, and
5. Upon completion of value engineering, conduct an independent cost estimate by another contractor in order to verify the value engineering and PE cost estimate.

This review of Preliminary Engineering must become part and parcel of the documentation prepared for the 100% Preliminary Engineering cost estimate, and must be reviewed and approved by the Principals before it can be incorporated into the final PE documentation.

In order for Fairfax County, Loudoun County and the Commonwealth to accept and review a 100% Preliminary Engineering package from MWAA, Value Engineering and an Independent Cost Estimate must be completed and approved by the Principals including

WMATA. MWAA must provide a Financing Plan for Phase 2 that includes a Dulles Toll Road toll feasibility study in order to gain a full understanding of the impact of the decision that must be made by our governing bodies. Once this information has been approved by the Principals, it can be provided by MWAA to Fairfax County and Loudoun County for formal review and decision as anticipated in the Funding Agreement. We believe it is in the best interest of the Project and the residents of Fairfax and Loudoun Counties to have necessary information on the most cost-effective alternative before our governing bodies make a decision on Phase 2. This will not be a hasty decision as we anticipate taking the full 90 days to respond to MWAA.

We continue to believe Metrorail in the Dulles Corridor is the best alternative to provide efficient transportation service to the fastest growing corridor in the Washington metropolitan area. MWAA needs to keep this partnership together and bring the most cost-effective rail alternative to Phase 2 of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project.

Sincerely

Sharon S. Bulova
Chairman,
Fairfax County
Board of Supervisors

Scott York
Chairman,
Loudoun County
Board of Supervisors

Sean T. Connaughton
Virginia Secretary of
Transportation